

Message Text

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10

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 AID-20 IGA-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 RSR-01 /083 W

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P R 080416 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2151

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

RUHQHQAAOCINCPAC

COMUSSAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 5483

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, TH, CB

SUBJ: POL AIRLIFT PLANNING FOR CAMBODIA

REF: STATE 064588

1. WE RECOGNIZE POLITICAL APPEAL SUGGESTION REFTEL. EXPECT AMBAS-
SADOR AND GEN. HAIG WILL DISCUSS WITH P. M. THANOM TOMORROW
MORNING

POSSIBLE RTAF ASSISTANCE IN POL AIRLIFT WITHIN BROADER CONTEXT
OF ENGAGING RTG IN ACTIONS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT SHORING UP OF
SITUATION IN CAMBODIA IN RESPONSE TO GKR REQUESTS FOR HELP.

2. BELIEVE BEFORE MAKING ANY MORE SPECIFIC APPROACH, HOWEVER, WE
SHOULD HAVE A CLEARER PICTURE OF LIFT REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIVING
CAPACITY AT PHNOM PENH. SEEMS TO US IT WOULD BE OPERATIONALLY
MORE PRACTICAL TO MESH ANY THAI OPERATIONS WITH OURS AFTER OUR
AIRLIFT UNDERWAY, RATHERNDHAN PRESS FOR RTAF PARTICIPATION AT THE
OUTSET.

3. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE NUMBER OF TECHNICAL QUESTIONS THAT
HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY LOOKED INTO:

A. RTAF C-123 FLEET HAS HAD RECURRING MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS AND
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AVAILABILITY OF SUFFICIENT AIRFRAMES IS DOUBTFUL WITHOUT INCREASED US MATERIAL AND SPARE PARTS ASSISTANCE.

B. THREAT TO SLOW LOW- FLYING AIRCRAFT IS INCREASING. RTAF CREWS ARE NOT TRAINED IN SA-7 (STRELLA MISSILE) COUNTER TECHNIQUES AND POSSIBILITY OF GREATER RISK OF AIRCRAFT LOSS FOR C-123' S AS OPPOSED C-130' S MUST BE CONSIDERED.

C. WE ARE UNAWARE OF C-123 BLADDER CAPABILITY AND DOUBTFUL SUCH COULD BE PROVIDED, INSTALLED, AND THAI CREWS TRAINED IN TIME TO BE PRODUCTIVE ASSIST TO EXISTING US CAPABILITY, EVEN IF AIRLIFT SHOULD CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME. AIR DELIVERY OF FUEL IN DRUMS IS UNECONOMICAL AT BEST. FURTHER EXPLORATION OF GKR NEED FOR DRUM DELIVERED FUEL AND ABILITY TO HANDLE WOULD BE REQUIRED.

4. FOREGOING ARE PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS. WE WILL BE LOOKING INTO FURTHER DETAILS (INCLUDING DELIVERIES OF SUPPLIES TO OTHER PARTS OF CAMBODIA) WITH GEN. KRIANGSAK WHEN HE RETURNS FROM INDONESIA MONDAY.

UNGER

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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